

During this first phase of the Southeast Seattle Transportation Study, a review of existing reports and data was carried out and summarized. The determination of needs that have been addressed and the identification of current needs are highlighted in Chapter 2 and in the project matrix (see Appendix A).

A variety of current identified needs have been addressed through the City of Seattle's recently completed construction work, the CIP process, the neighborhood planning process, the station area planning effort, Mayor Nickel's Southeast Seattle Action Agenda, and Sound Transit's light rail design implementation. However, many current needs remain. Travel demand forecasting will also be done to determine future needs. These needs will be further analyzed in Phase 2 of the study, to develop improvement ideas and a prioritized project list.

### **5.1 Inventory of Existing Conditions and Summary of Current Needs**

The following steps have been taken to identify current needs:

1. Review past plans and studies: the team reviewed over 20 past plans and studies completed in the study area since 1998.
2. Collect existing transportation data: information including transit routes (and frequency), pedestrian and bicycle networks, the arterial street network, traffic volumes, and collision data were collected and analyzed.
3. Review census data: analyzed census data to determine current residents' travel patterns by mode.
4. Include SDOT's 2005 identified needs: identified SDOT maintenance and roadway improvement needs that are planned but currently unfunded.
5. Review current City policy: reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Strategic Plan to identify policy issues that need to be considered.

The needs identified from each of these sources are compiled into a project matrix (see Appendix A). They will serve as a foundation to analyze proposed improvements and to develop a prioritized project and program list for further evaluation in Phase 2.

Existing data such as transit routes (and frequency), pedestrian and bicycle networks, community generators, the arterial roadway network, traffic volumes, collision data, and freight mobility were collected, reviewed and summarized. The data analyses validated Southeast Seattle's transportation needs and helped determine which recommendations would serve those needs. Several overarching transportation needs were consistently identified. These needs are discussed in this chapter and will be carried forward in Phase 2 of the SETS.

Community members in Seattle neighborhoods developed long-range plans to guide the future of their communities. The neighborhood planning effort developed neighborhood boundaries, and this Existing Conditions Report identifies and summarizes the needs that are consistent with these boundaries. Figure 1 illustrates the neighborhood planning boundaries located within the study area. It is acknowledged that the entire project area is not covered by the neighborhood boundaries and that some geographic gaps exist.

Five core neighborhoods were identified through the planning process: North Rainier, North Beacon Hill, Columbia City, MLK at Holly Street (the Othello neighborhood), and Rainier Beach.

Based on the Existing Conditions review, several needs were found to affect a large geographic area, other needs were similar to all neighborhood areas, and others specifically addressed the unique needs of each of the five core neighborhoods. These needs are presented in the following sections.

## **5.2 Larger Geographic Area**

Several specific needs affect a broad portion of the entire study area. This includes evaluating Rainier Avenue S. and Beacon Avenue S. and prioritizing their function in the future, in terms of serving businesses and residents and promoting non-motorized commutes and transit travel. This is particularly relevant given the changes occurring on M.L. King Jr. Way S., another north-south corridor that currently serves high traffic volumes.

Another need that affects the entire study area is the suggested development of a circulatory or shuttle transit system or service that connects the neighborhoods, town centers, and light rail.

## **5.3 Similar Needs Identified in All Neighborhoods**

All neighborhoods are requesting improvements to pedestrian or bicycle facilities in addition to facilities that are already part of the new light rail station designs. This may include improvements along east-west connectors throughout the study area.

All neighborhoods also encourage Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) near the light rail stations and recommend that incentives be provided to encourage this development.

## **5.4 Needs Identified in Neighborhoods**

Table 21 summarizes the overall current needs in the Southeast Seattle neighborhoods, and Table 22 provides detailed information for each neighborhood need summarized in Table 21.

**Table 20: Summary of Needs Identified in Southeast Seattle Neighborhoods**

Need	Neighborhood				
	North Rainier	Columbia City	MLK at Holly (Othello)	Rainier Beach	North Beacon Hill
Town Center Development	✓		✓		
Improve Pedestrian Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve Bicycle Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhance Transit Service	✓		✓		✓
Urban Design/Gateways/ Streetscape		✓	✓		
Manage Parking		✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve Vehicular Circulation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Table 21: Recommendations on Addressing Identified Needs in Southeast Seattle Neighborhoods

Need	Neighborhood				
	North Rainier	Columbia City	MLK at Holly (Othello)	Rainier Beach	North Beacon Hill
Town Center Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage parking near future light rail station (consider a Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) west and east of the station, which could coincide with the opening of the station).</li><li>• Improve safety and discourage street parking and loitering along Cheasty Blvd. and greenbelt.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide expedited review/SEPA clearance and other incentives for TOD projects.</li></ul>		
Improve Pedestrian Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide sidewalk improvements along Rainier Ave. S.</li><li>• Provide sidewalk connections (east-west) off of M.L. King Jr. Way S.</li><li>• Develop a pedestrian network from upland neighborhoods along street ends and street rights-of- way to connect down to the Town Center.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze potential options for improvement to M.L. King Jr. Way S. and Rainier Ave. S. and the corresponding potential impacts on pedestrian access.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) New Holly development to include a pedestrian and bike path along S. Myrtle St., connecting M.L. King Jr. Way S. to the Chief Sealth Trail and Beacon Ave. S.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pedestrian Overlay: As the area develops in the future, consider a P2 overlay zone to further encourage pedestrian uses and building amenities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Install a traffic signal and “ladder-type” crosswalk marking at the S. McClellan St./5th Ave. S. intersection.</li><li>• As redevelopment occurs, provide sidewalks on both sides of every street within the Urban Village area where none exist.</li><li>• Examine the possibility of wider sidewalks (8-foot-wide minimum), on Beacon Ave. S. in the Urban Village core area.</li><li>• Improve 14th Ave. S. for pedestrian accessibility by installing sidewalks and traffic calming devices.</li></ul>
Improve Bicycle Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an east-west bike connection to the S. McClellan St. station from Mt. Baker and Beacon Hill.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze potential options for improvement to M.L. King Jr. Way S. and Rainier Ave. S. and the corresponding potential impacts on bicycle access.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider striping the bike lane west along S. Othello St. to Beacon Ave. S. in conjunction with the S. Myrtle St. connection. Explore striping S. Othello St. east of M.L. King Jr. Way S. with bike lanes.</li><li>• For the proposed bike path on S. Myrtle St., assume that bikes will cross M.L. King Jr. Way S. at S. Myrtle St. and travel south on 42nd Ave S. to reach the station, so public space will be needed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve or develop bicycle lanes/trails.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue the Beacon Ave. S. “boulevard treatment” with street trees, improved street lighting, curb extensions, and channelization to define one vehicular lane and one bicycle lane in each direction.</li></ul>
Enhance Transit Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide local east-west transit service.</li><li>• Enhance the quality of the bus transfer station at Rainier Ave. S. and I-90 and improve the overall experience for transit riders at both the Rainier Ave. S. street level and I-90 bridge deck.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide bus service to the Holly Park Campus of Learners and the South Beacon Hill neighborhoods.</li><li>• Expand King County Metro bus stop maintenance and clean-up programs.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modify existing routes and stops. For example, add trips on Route 36 and/or rerouting to serve the Urban Village and light rail; ensuring that Route 38 connects to light rail; provide nighttime service on Route 60; relocate the existing Metro bus stop at S. Hinds St. further north; consider through-routing for Routes 36 and 70 between Beacon Hill and the University District; move the existing S. Horton St. far-side bus stop to the near side of S. Hinds St.</li></ul>

**Table 21 (continued): Recommendations on Addressing Identified Needs in Southeast Seattle Neighborhoods**

Need	Neighborhood				
	North Rainier	Columbia City	MLK at Holly (Othello)	Rainier Beach	North Beacon Hill
Urban Design/Gateways/ Streetscape		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the option of closing off 31st Ave. S between S. Alaska St. and M.L. King Jr. Way S. to increase safety and improve redevelopment opportunities.</li> <li>Add wayfinding signage to community and business destinations</li> <li>Strengthen gateways and use special paving to welcome pedestrians and automobiles</li> <li>Explore reducing traffic lanes through the business district along Rainier Ave. S.</li> <li>Extend streetscape elements to side streets within the business district</li> <li>Enliven alley with pedestrian-friendly development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop resources and implement a program to plan and install streetscape improvements in the commercial district along M.L. King Jr. Way S. and S. Graham St. to help promote pedestrian activity in the area.</li> </ul>		
Manage Parking		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parking strategies were identified with the community and have been implemented, but some longer-term goals remain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan/implement parking management programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a Residential Parking Zone west and east of the station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the number of parking spaces required as a TOD incentive, and establish RPZs if needed in adjacent neighborhoods.</li> </ul>
Improve Vehicular Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a monitoring and mitigation program for cut-through traffic or other impacts due to light rail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a detailed transportation analysis of all major north-south transportation corridors within the areas influenced by the light rail station (this includes Rainier Ave. S., M.L. King Jr. Way S., Lake Washington Blvd., and the S. Wilson St./50<sup>th</sup> Ave. S./Seward Park corridor).</li> <li>Analyze potential options for improvement to M.L. King Jr. Way S. and Rainier Ave. S. and the corresponding potential impacts on traffic flow.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate future conditions of arterial streets relative to development of light rail station.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and build a roundabout at Renton Ave. S., S. Roxbury St., and 51st Ave. S.</li> <li>Install a traffic calming circle at the north end of S. Wabash St. at Rainier Ave. S.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S. McClellan St. between 15th Ave. S. and 17th Ave. S.: provide left-turn pockets for eastbound and westbound S. McClellan St. traffic at the Beacon Ave. S. intersection for those turning onto Beacon Ave. S.</li> <li>Study traffic signal timing at Beacon Ave. S. and S. McClellan St.</li> </ul>